

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-05 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 EB-08 AID-05 L-03 TRSE-00 OMB-01
SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /067 W
-----001957 201258Z /72

O 201227Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8262

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 01836

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EAID, MT, US
SUBJECT: MALTA: KARMENU VELLA APPOINTMENT

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN SECRETARY ABELA TELEPHONED US THIS MORNING TO EXPRESS CONCERN THAT MALTESE MP KARMENU VELLA (MLP) WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY IN GETTING APPOINTMENT TO CALL ON NEWSOM OR OTHER SENIOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL. WE RECOMMEND THAT SOMEONE AT EUR LEVEL (E.G. DICK VINE) SEE HIM. END SUMMARY.

2. WE FIRST LEARNED OF VELLA'S TRIP TO US ON FRIDAY LAST WHEN ABELA CALLED DCM TO ASK THAT VISA BE EXPEDITED. NO MENTION WAS MADE THEN OF ANY INTEREST IN CALLING AT DEPARTMENT. LATTER APPARENTLY DEVELOPED AFTER MINTOFF DIRECTED ABELA ON SATURDAY TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MALTESE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TO REQUEST APPOINTMENT. PURPOSE APPARENTLY IS TO APPEAL DEPARTMENT'S DECISION ON MARSAXLOKK LOAN REQUEST.

3. ABELA CALLED DCM THIS MORNING TO COMPLAIN THAT VELLA COULD NOT GET APPOINTMENT TO SEE NEWSOM AND/OR OTHER SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS. I CALLED ABELA BACK AND TOLD HIM I REGRETTED GOM HAD HANDLED MATTER IN THIS WAY AND REMINDED HIM THAT APPOINTMENTS WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS
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WERE DIFFICULT IN BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND ESPECIALLY ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. EMBASSY MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ASSIST HAD WE BEEN INFORMED EARLIER. I ALSO POINTEDLY REMINDED ABELA THAT I HAD TWICE SOUGHT TO MEET AND TALK WITH VELLA ON EARLIER OCCASIONS AND HAD RECEIVED REGRETS.

4. I TOLD ABELA WE WOULD SEE WHAT WE COULD DO BUT COULD

NOT PROMISE ANYTHING AT THIS POINT. AS FOR MARSAXLOKK
LOAN REQUEST I SAID THAT DECISION I HAD COMMUNICATED STOOD
AND I HAD NO REASON TO THINK THAT THERE WAS ANY BASIS FOR
CHANGE. I REITERATED THIS POSITION AFTER ABELA INQUIRED
WHETHER THIS OBSERVATION REFLECTED CONVERSATION WITH
VEST IN LONDON. ABELA COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT I HAD
INDICATED SOME POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN DECISION IN LIGHT
OF MY AGREEMENT WITH PRIME MINISTER'S OBSERVATION DURING
CONVERSATION JUNE 14 THAT HE NEEDED "ELBOW ROOM." I
RESPONDED THAT IN AGREEING THAT MINTOFF NEEDED ELBOW ROOM
I HAD NOT MEANT IN ANY WAY TO SUGGEST OUR DECISION ON THE
LOAN WOULD BE CHANGED. WHAT I HAD SAID WAS THAT I
APPRECIATED MALTA NEEDED ELBOW ROOM IN PRESENT CIRCUM-
STANCES AND THAT I WAS CONFIDENT MINTOFF COULD KEEP IT.

5. RECOMMENDATION: VELLA IS A YOUNG (28 YEAR OLD)
FRESHMAN MLP MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT WHOM WE DO NOT KNOW
PERSONALLY BUT WHO IS ONE OF SEVERAL YOUTHFUL MP'S WHOM
MINTOFF APPEARS TO BE GROOMING FOR LARGER ROLES IN THE MLP.
VELLA HAS TRAVELED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITH MINTOFF ON
FOREIGN VISITS AND IN THAT RESPECT APPEARS TO BE SOMEONE
IN WHOM HE HAS CONFIDENCE. IN THIS INSTANCE MINTOFF IS
OBVIOUSLY GRASPING AN IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY TO TRY TO GET
OUR DECISION ON THE LOAN CHANGED. I RECOMMEND HE BE SEEN
AT THE EUR LEVEL AND THAT THE DECISION I CONVEYED BE
REITERATED, ACCOMPANIED BY REAFFIRMATION OF WHAT WE HAVE
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SAID HERE CONCERNING OUR WILLINGNESS TO BE OF
ASSISTANCE IN OTHER WAYS. LAINGEN

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Message Attributes

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